United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/921
28 June 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council asks Secretary-General to send high-level mission to Baghdad to meet with Iraqi authorities to discuss immediate access to all weapon sites and security for inspection team.

- Security Council expresses full support for Secretary-General's proposal to hold high-level international conference on question of Cyprus.

- Secretary-General decides to send mission to South Africa in August to gather first-hand information on degree of progress in dismantling of apartheid.

- Practical measures concerning Western Sahara are discussed at United Nations meeting in Geneva between representative of Moroccan Government and POLISARIO.

- Agreement reached on resumption of talks under Secretary-General's auspices to consider visit by Portuguese Parliamentary delegation to East Timor.

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The Security Council has asked the Secretary-General to send a high-level mission to Baghdad to meet "with the highest levels of the Iraqi Government" following reports of a further incident today in which the Iraqi military authorities impeded the access of a United Nations team to a site designated for inspection. The decision came after a report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Special Commission charged with inspecting Iraq's weapons capabilities.

In a statement read at a brief meeting this evening, the President of the Council, Jean-Jacques Bechio (Côte d'Ivoire), said Council members had learned with grave concern that a joint IAEA/Special Commission Inspection Team had been denied "immediate and unimpeded access" to the site, and that the Iraqi military fired small arms into the air when members of the team were trying to photograph loaded vehicles, leaving the site.

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The President said this occurred following incidents earlier this week when the Iraqi military authorities denied the Nuclear Inspection Team access to certain facilities at another designated site. Members of the Council, he said, strongly deplored these incidents and condemned the conduct of the Iraqi authorities. The incidents were flagrant violations of Security Council resolution 687, and of undertakings which Iraq had given.

The Council President said members had decided to ask the Secretary-General to send a high-level mission to Baghdad immediately, to convey the Council's urgent demand for unequivocal assurances that the Iraqi Government would ensure full cooperation with the Special Commission in the discharge of its mandate, and also to provide unconditional guarantees for the safety and security of all personnel carrying out functions in connection with resolution 687.

The Council also called on Iraq to grant the inspection team currently in Iraq "immediate and unimpeded access to the objects "which they had tried to inspect today", and to any other site deemed necessary.

The Council's action followed a communication to the Secretary-General in which the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Rolf Ekeus, reported that when the inspection team was waiting for access to a site near the city of Fallujah today the Chief Inspector asked that there should be no movement of transport or equipment, pending permission for the team to enter and to inspect. While waiting for access, which was eventually denied, the team saw numerous vehicles in the compound loaded with objects which they specifically wished to inspect. The vehicles began to leave the compound through another gate, and when inspectors began to photograph this movement Iraqi personnel fired small arms into the air.

The Secretary-General's high-level mission to Baghdad, which leaves New York tonight, will comprise Executive Chairman Ekeus, the Director-General of IAEA, Hans Blix, and the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Yasushi Akashi.

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The Security Council has expressed its full support for the Secretary-General's proposal to hold a high-level meeting on the question of Cyprus, between the five permanent members of the Council, as well as the representatives of Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, and the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

In a statement on behalf of its members, Council President Jean-Jacques Bechio (Côte d'Ivoire) said the Council regretted that, despite the Secretary-General's effort, the necessary progress had not yet been made in achieving an outline for an agreement between the parties.

The President asked the Secretary-General to provide a full report to the Council by the end of August on the substance of the ideas that were discussed and the responses of all concerned, and to provide his assessment of the

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situation particularly with regard to whether the conditions were conducive to a successful outcome of a high-level international meeting.

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The Secretary-General has decided to send a mission to South Africa during the first half of August. Similar to one sent last year, the mission will gather first-hand information on the degree of progress in the dismantling of apartheid in that country.

In a letter to the President of the General Assembly, dated 24 June, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said he intended to delay his report to the Assembly on the situation in South Africa because of ongoing developments and consultations with South African authorities and the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), among others.

An International Conference on the Educational Needs of the Victims of Apartheid in South Africa ended today in Paris. During the gathering, which was sponsored by the Special Committee against Apartheid, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, several speakers complained that blacks in South Africa had long been the victims of racial education policies. As a result, it was said, about half of the 15 million black school-age children in South Africa were not attending school.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative on Western Sahara, Johannes Manz, has informed Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar on the outcome of a two-day meeting he held in Geneva with representatives of the Government of Morocco and of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO).

A United Nations official told correspondents the meeting included discussion of matters relating to the preparation for the deployment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The official said the process of close and informal consultations was intended to continue with all concerned until the cease-fire prior to the referendum. The Special Representative would be taking up his duties in Laâyoune on 6 September, the date that both Morocco and Frente POLISARIO have accepted for the cease-fire in response to the proposals made by the Secretary-General.

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A United Nations official said today that agreement had been reached on a number of pending issues regarding a proposed visit by a Portuguese Parliamentary delegation to East Timor. The agreement was reached during a meeting yesterday, chaired by the Secretary-General, between the Ambassadors of Indonesia and Portugal. It was agreed that talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General would resume in the near future, in order to consider the practical arrangements for the visit of the Portuguese Parliamentary delegation.

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